

**Testimony of Karen Carty**  
**Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter**  
**Submitted to the Appropriations Committee**  
**Wednesday February 23, 2022**

Honorable Chairmen, Ranking Members, and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Karen Carty from Rocky Hill and I am an advocate and Congressional ambassador for the Alzheimer's Association CT Chapter. The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment H.B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023 regarding the Alzheimer's State Respite Program.

Currently there are 80,000 people in Connecticut living with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia. The Alzheimer's Association estimates that this number will rise to 91,000 people by 2025.

More than 80% of the help provided to older adults in the United States comes from family members, friends, or other unpaid caregivers — and nearly half of families caring for an older adult are caring for someone with dementia.

When my mother and I became caregivers to my grandmother, we quickly realized that we didn't have the necessary skills or time to keep her calm, occupied, and prevent her from leaving our house. Since we both worked full time, after a few months we had to make the devastating choice to put her in a nursing home where she passed 6 years later.

My cousin Irene was in the middle stage of ALZ when the first experimental medications became available. A mixture of these drugs allowed her to attend an adult day care center for about a year. My aunt was lucky to have had the savings to afford the out-of-pocket costs for these medications and the day center. Her time at the day center was priceless because it allowed her 82-year-old husband to get food, her prescriptions, then rest for ½ hour before picking her up and starting all over again.

Caregivers of people with dementia are twice as likely to report substantial emotional, financial, and physical difficulties as caregivers of people without dementia. For example, my aunt shattered her ankle after wandering outside and taking a bad fall. To heal her ankle, my uncle had to barricade her into their bed every night to keep her from getting up, since she didn't remember that she had surgery and was in a cast. He didn't sleep more a few hours a night for many months, which led to a dramatic, unhealthy weight loss, isolation, and increased anxiety about how he could keep her safe.

Respite services provide temporary, substitute care that gives the caregiver a break from his or her caregiving duties. The services can be provided in a variety of settings, including the individual's home, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes. This temporary relief enables caregivers to ensure their loved ones continue to receive quality care while giving themselves an opportunity to manage and improve their own health which is often compromised. Caregivers of people with dementia are twice as likely to report substantial emotional, financial, and physical difficulties as caregivers of people without dementia.

We know increasing the funding for this program is so important to help families like mine access services like Adult Day Centers for respite to be able to better manage caregiving in the home.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to provide comment today.